

CHAPTER 3 **A Diversified Strategy**

Available funding and projects currently slated for funding will not be enough to maintain the present level of mobility in Alameda County. The quality of transportation service will worsen unless the County pursues a broader range of strategies for ensuring that travelers can get from Point A to Point B—a plan that uses investment in concert with pricing, road space, transit, system management and land use regulation.

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This chapter proposes a diversified strategy for transportation improvements. A broader approach is appropriate for Alameda County because it is more cost-effective than investment alone, and because it can be tailored to fit the conditions and circumstances found in each part of the County.

LESSONS LEARNED

The proposed strategy reflects the essential lessons policymakers have learned about transportation since World War II. First, even slow-growing communities require continuing investment in transportation projects and facilities. Thus, continuing investment and reinvestment are necessary elements of any strategy of transportation improvement in Alameda County.

Second, the appropriate mix of transportation services and improvements depends on local conditions and local needs. Different communities require a different mix of transportation services, and cost-effective results are most likely to be achieved when investments are tailored to fit the circumstances of time and place.

Transit investments are most likely to significantly relieve congestion in older urban communities and in the corridors linking them with the suburbs—markets with enough people to support well-patronized services. An investment program that includes boulevard construction and operating buses on major roadways can be cost-effective in both suburban and urban settings. Carpools and express bus service can make a significant contribution to personal mobility in corridors that connect suburbs to one another. Each of these improvements—boulevards, parkways, transit service and HOV lanes—should be used to supplement the capacity of the freeway system where each is most appropriate.

Third, a community's investment requirements change as it grows toward build-out. As build-out approaches—when there is no more vacant land left to develop in an area—suburban cities must determine how to maximize efficient use of existing road space and make a commitment to maintaining existing facilities. But they also need to plan for areas of density—residential and commercial—that will

support transit use. That means complementary zoning. Then transit investments can provide the transportation access necessary to serve those clusters of dense activity.

Fourth, a successful transportation system requires balanced attention to the requirements of freight and passenger movement. With population and employment growing, ongoing highway improvements are necessary to maintain the efficiency of moving freight and distributing goods—particularly in those corridors where truck movements are concentrated. In many cases, operational improvements may offer a superior alternative to major construction.

Fifth, the diversity of transportation needs found in a metropolitan area cannot be met without flexible funding sources that allow policymakers to tailor improvement programs to fit local needs and decide how best to spend those funds.

Last, investment alone does not offer the most cost-effective strategy for meeting transportation needs. Investment is most cost-effective when coupled with policies designed to manage the transportation system, including: road space and transit operations; pricing policies to reduce congestion, ridesharing and transit use; and coordinated transportation and land use planning.

These lessons will guide the CMA as it makes the strategic choices necessary to create a balanced transportation system to serve the needs of the next generation. Two of these lessons are critically important for Alameda County:

- The *Countywide Transportation Plan* must reconcile the requirements of freight and passenger movement; and
- Cost-effective results are most likely when investment is coupled with policies designed to price congestion, manage road space and complement land use.

ELEMENTS OF THE DIVERSIFIED STRATEGY

The diversified strategy for Alameda County consists of seven elements:

1. An investment program with the flexibility to finance street, highway and mass transit projects—where it offers the most cost-effective method of transportation improvement.
2. A commitment to funding the highest priority projects in the County, including improvements that address the most congested corridors.
3. Strategies designed to ensure enough funding for the maintenance, operation and operational improvement of existing facilities and services.
4. Strategies designed to ensure efficient operation of those facilities that are essential for freight movement.

5. Cooperative planning designed to engage city, county, CMA and state authorities in planning for corridor/area management.
6. Planning guidelines designed to ensure strategic treatment of hubs, gateways and intermodal terminals.
7. Pricing policies designed to improve efficiency of the existing transportation system and reconcile mobility, air quality and greenhouse gases.

